



CINCLORAMPUS RUFESCENS.

J. Gould and E. C. Richter del et lith.

Hullmandel & Walter Imp.

CINCLORAMPUS RUFESCENS.

Rufous-tinted Cincloramphus.

Anthus rufescens, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 230.

E-rolè-del, Aborigines of the Mountain districts of Western Australia.

Singing Lark of the Colonists.

If Australia be not celebrated for its singing-birds, it has still some few whose voices serve to enliven the monotony of its scenery; and of these no one deserves greater attention than the bird here represented, which is a very sweet songster, and whose note somewhat resembles, but is much inferior to that of our own Skylark. With the exception of Van Diemen's Land, where I believe it is never seen, it appears to be distributed over all parts of Australia, as evidenced by my collection, containing specimens from every locality yet visited by Europeans. In New South Wales and Western Australia it is strictly migratory, and only a summer visitor, arriving in August and departing in February; on the other hand, I met with it on the sand hills at Holdfast Bay in South Australia in the month of July, the period of winter: although not exclusively a terrestrial bird, it spends much of its time on the ground, from which it makes perpendicular ascents to a great height in the air, and then descending to the tops of the highest trees, flies horizontally from one tree to another, singing all the time with the greatest volubility; the female, which is not more than half the size of the male, remaining all the while on the ground, from which she is not easily aroused, and consequently not so often seen. It evinces a great partiality to open grassy plains here and there studded with trees. It breeds in October, November and December, and sometimes rears two broods during the season. The nest is placed in a depression of the earth, most frequently at the foot of a slightly raised tuft of grass, and is externally composed of strong grasses and lined with very fine grasses, and sometimes with hairs. The eggs are four in number, ten lines long by seven and a half lines broad, and are of a purplish white, very boldly marked with freckles and small blotches of deep chestnut-brown, so much so as frequently to render the blotches more conspicuous than the ground colour.

The female frequently utters a monotonous shriek or call at night.

The male has all the upper surface dark brown, each feather margined with olive-brown; upper tail-coverts rufous; lores black; stripe above the eye and throat whitish; all the under surface pale brownish grey, deepening into buff on the under tail-coverts, and with a series of minute spots of brown on the breast; irides hazel; bill dark lead-colour in summer, fleshy brown in winter; tarsi yellowish grey; feet bluish ashy grey.

The female is smaller and is destitute of the black lores; in other respects she is so like the male that a separate description is unnecessary.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size, on a branch of the cherry-tree of the colonists (*Exocarpus Cupressiformis*).